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February 11, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (LA-03) today announced that Plaquemines Parish will receive \$26,469,185 in federal disaster aid grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

These grants will reimburse the Parish's expenses for the replacement of storm water pump stations throughout Plaquemines Parish. The facilities were submerged for an extended period of time in salt-infused and contaminated flood water that caused the equipment to malfunction, and pumps have failed to start. At all of the pump stations, the diesel engines, circuit breakers, portable generators, windows, doors, and the entire electrical system were damaged by the floodwaters.

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"In south Louisiana, water pump stations are vital tools for managing flooding and protecting our homes and businesses during and after storms," said Rep. Melancon. "Getting these pump stations replaced and running at full capacity will help protect the people of Plaquemines Parish and their property from major damage during future storms. While we can't always prevent flooding in our coastal communities, we can work together to lessen the impact and speed up our recovery."

The following federal grants were announced today:

- **\$6,615,751.34 Upper Triumph Storm Water Pump Station (Plaquemines Parish).** Located on the West Bank of the Mississippi River, the pump station drains approximately 2,100 acres. The version announced today expands the scope of the work that will be reimbursed and increases the grant amount to more accurately reflect the costs incurred by the Parish for replacing the pump station and all components. Project worksheet number 17118-2.

- **\$7,092,781.99 Braithwaite Storm Water Pump Station (Plaquemines Parish).** The storm surge and flooding from Hurricane Katrina caused major damage to the Braithwaite Storm Water Pump Station. The pump station is located on the East Bank of the Mississippi River. The version announced today expands the scope of the work that will be reimbursed and increases the grant amount to more accurately reflect the costs incurred by the Parish for replacing the pump station and all components. Project worksheet number 17119-2.

- **\$6,636,495.29 Belair Storm Water Pump Station (Plaquemines Parish).** The storm surge and flooding from Hurricane Katrina caused major damage to the Belair Storm Water Pump Station. Located on the East Bank of the Mississippi River, the pump station drains approximately 9,042 acres. The version announced today expands the scope of the work that will be reimbursed and increases the grant amount to more accurately reflect the costs incurred by the Parish for replacing the pump station and all components. Project worksheet number 17120-2.

- **\$6,124,156.78 Sunrise #1 Storm Water Pump Station (Plaquemines Parish).** The storm surge and flooding from Hurricane Katrina caused major damage to the Sunrise # 1 Storm Water Pump Station. The pump station is located on the West Bank of the Mississippi River. The version announced today expands the scope of the work that will be reimbursed and increases the grant amount to more accurately reflect the costs incurred by the Parish for replacing the pump station and all components. Project worksheet number 17447-2.

Rep. Melancon has worked in Congress to further reduce the financial burden on local governments in south Louisiana still struggling to recover from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. After the storms, he worked with the Louisiana delegation and Congressional leadership to waive the 10 percent local match requirement for disaster recovery projects and allow federal Community Disaster Loans to be forgiven for localities that can not afford to repay them.

Under the federal Robert T. Stafford Act, public assistance projects like those announced today required a 10 percent cost share from local governments upfront before the remaining 90 percent in federal grant money can be used. Many of the estimated 23,000 disaster recovery projects in Louisiana had been put on hold because local governments did not have the resources to provide the match. The local match requirement has been waived 32 times since 1985 when per capita rebuilding costs have been deemed excessive, but had not yet been waived for Katrina and Rita.

Rep. Melancon worked with House leadership to include the waiver of the 10% match in the Iraq/Katrina Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President at the end of May. This bill provides a total of \$6.419 billion in

hurricane recovery and relief funding for Louisiana and other Gulf Coast states.

In addition, Rep. Melancon successfully lobbied House leadership to include language in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill making Katrina- and Rita-affected communities eligible for forgiveness of their Community Disaster Loans. An estimated \$1 billion in CDL's were provided by the federal government to hurricane-affected local governments immediately following Katrina and Rita to help them continue daily operations, such as payroll for law enforcement and emergency responders. Many local governments do not have the ability to repay this massive debt, as their tax bases were devastated by the storms. Rep. Melancon argued that, in the past, CDL's have been forgiven following many other major disasters, including Hurricane Andrew and the September 11th terrorist attacks. With the passage of the Supplemental, Katrina and Rita CDL's became eligible for forgiveness, taking a huge financial burden off of local governments in south Louisiana.